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**RISING STAR:** D.J. Arrazcaeta

**FEATURE:** Mark Yorke

**FEATURED AGENT:** Jodi Avery and Her Doberman, Zara

**THIRSTY THURSDAY**

**TAMPA BAY REAL PRODUCERS AGENT AWARDS**

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Rich Shelley and I AM Hopeful, Inc.

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- Clean, wash or paint your patio furniture
- Declutter the porch
- Powerwash the porch
- Clean the grill
- Check outdoor lights and/or add new lighting
- Clean windows and doors leading to the outdoor living space
- Add plants and/or flowers
- Remove and prune dead plants, flowers, trees, and shrubs
- Add fresh mulch to flower beds
- Mow the lawn
- Add citronella candles
- Add pillows and cushions to outdoor furniture
- Clean, wash or paint the garage door
- Remove cobwebs in the garage and outdoor areas
- De-clutter the garage
- Clean the garage floor
- Organize outdoor items
- Clean out the refrigerator/freezer chest in the garage
- Set up a recycling station or spare pantry
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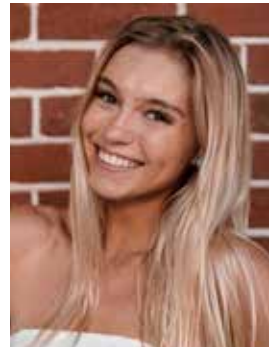
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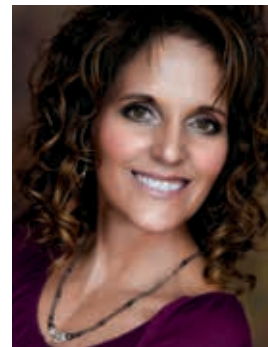
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- 2. On-time closings.** Turning a loan application around requires a certain amount of handholding by the Loan Officer (LO). Pulling together required documentation and processing it through underwriting to get "clear to close" requires a high level of competence across the lender's organization. A seasoned LO knows where the pitfalls are – and how to avoid them – to ensure everything is in place for the closing and that closings are on-time.
- 3. Products.** Because you have clients with a wide range of needs, you want a lender with an array of loan products. Aside from the standard Conventional, FHA, and VA loans, you'll want a Jumbo product, home renovation programs like the 203(k), USDA rural development, and loans for clients who don't meet the standard income and asset requirements. If you don't have a good working knowledge of the loan products available, having an experienced LO partner always helps.
- 4. Superior customer service.** Expectations naturally run high when one professional hands off a client to another. You want an LO that *shares your commitment to providing excellent service* – an LO that listens carefully to your client's needs and can find the best loan program, interest rate, and terms to meet those needs. A knowledgeable LO who takes the time to explain the importance of your client's credit score, available down payment options, the underwriting process, and exactly what is needed for a smooth closing. You want an LO that will pick up their phone whenever possible and always returns calls in a timely fashion. And you want an LO you can depend on to communicate proactively, keeping you and your client up to date on the progress of their loan application.
- 5. Transparency.** Lastly, you want to work with an LO and a lender you can count on. One that will not fail to disclose an issue as soon as it arises and has an alternative to remedy the situation whenever possible. Trust is very important. When something goes wrong – a closing is delayed or, worse your client's loan application is declined – the LO alerts you immediately, takes responsibility, and can explain the lender's decision to you and your client.

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**"A GOOD FATHER IS ONE OF THE MOST UNSUNG, UNPRAISED, UNNOTICED, AND YET ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE ASSETS IN OUR SOCIETY." – BILLY GRAHAM**

Happy Father's Day to all the fathers out there! Thanks for doing all that you do every day for your families. Fatherhood is rewarding. Watching your children grow up, being there for them, and investing in their lives is priceless.

This month, we have another jam-packed issue that highlights the Top Producers in the Tampa Bay area. In today's hot market, REALTORS® are crushing it. Catering to their clients, showing listings (virtual or in-person), and building their client base is important. The attention that you invest in your business will pay off tomorrow.

Be sure to check out our photos from our recent event!

Keep connecting, keep selling homes, and make 2022 your best year yet. With a solid work ethic and perseverance, anything is possible!

I look forward to meeting more of you in the days and months to come, whether on Zoom or in person.



Until next month!

**Don Hill, Publisher**  
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▶▶ making a difference

# RICH SHELLEY

## HELPS THE HOMELESS THROUGH I AM HOPEFUL, INC.



Written by  
Elizabeth McCabe



Photo Credit: Allie Serrano  
of Allie Serrano  
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I AM Hopeful, Inc. is a cause near and dear to team leader Rich Shelley's heart.

This nonprofit serves homeless youth between 18-25 years old in Florida. Rich comments, "A lot of them are aged out of foster care or are single moms. There are a lot of children and families at risk of becoming homeless. I AM Hopeful allocates short-term and long-term housing, career development, training, job replacement, and provides essential items." Thanks to clothing for job interviews, bus passes, and even hygiene products, recipients are finding hope in the midst of their hurt.

In the last 12 weeks, I AM Hopeful has given out over 95,000 pounds of food. Food is provided by World Vision and Dammy Sanchez and their dedicated team at this nonprofit pass it out to those in need. Over four thousand families were fed in Clearwater, Wimauma, Tampa Bay, Dover, Plant City and Wesley Chapel. Every Monday is *Monday of Generosity*, and we feed as many people as we can," says Dammy. "It's a lot of work, but it's very rewarding."

### About I AM Hopeful, Inc.

I AM Hopeful, Inc. was founded by Damaris (Dammy) Sanchez in 2018.

According to their website, "We are making a great impact reducing the unemployed population and helping to eradicate homelessness. Also, our initiatives are helping to increase the transition rate in schools and colleges by providing teens with career assessments, scholarship allocation, motivational talks, mentoring, coaching, listening to their challenges, initiating volunteer programs, and building personal relationships."

At the age of 25, Dammy found herself homeless. At four months pregnant with no family and no income, she found herself evicted. Now she is excelling in real estate and is determined to make a difference for those without homes. In 2010, she started feeding the homeless by making soup and sandwiches in downtown Miami every Tuesday. In time, she formed her nonprofit, which has brought hope to the homeless ever since.

...





...

“This charity does amazing things,” says Rich. “We’re starting our Christmas drive now. Being homeless during the holidays is terrible.” Rich is proud to support I AM Hopeful, making a difference in the process. Rich uses his profit for a purpose. He can’t say enough about this nonprofit that is truly helping others.

“There’s nothing more rewarding than helping those in need. If you are looking for a charity to support, we sure could use your help.”

For more information on I AM Hopeful, Inc., check out their website, [www.iamthegroupfoundation.org](http://www.iamthegroupfoundation.org).



“  
**There’s nothing more rewarding than helping those in need.**  
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# JODI AVERY

## and Her Doberman, Zara

### ▶ featured agent

Written by Marina Roukalova

Jodi Avery, top real estate broker at Keller Williams Clearwater, and her pet Doberman, Zara, make a great team.

Everybody knows the real estate process can be stressful at times and that pets provide great stress relief and companionship for their owners. For years, Jodi has been one of Tampa Bay's top real estate brokers winning multiple awards and turning meaningful connections with clients into friendships. One of Jodi's closest companions is her 2-year-old Blue European Doberman, Zara.

More than just a pet, Zara and Jodi share a strong bond.



Jodi says, "Our pets steal our hearts and bring us joy. My years of experience have shown me that having a powerful dog like Zara by my side is a good idea for protection as I navigate the day-to-day of the real estate business. Moreover, Zara has become a social media star in her own right. And she's so cute, too!"

Zara can often be seen on Jodi's social media feeds and the inspiration behind the "Woof Wednesday" segments. On "Woof Wednesdays," Jodi encourages Tampa Bay pet owners to share their favorite pictures of their pets. From the goofy things that pets can be up to the beautiful snaps of different breeds and the kind of pets completing families, these social media posts bring a smile to everybody's face.

Dobermans do have a fierce reputation, but here are some more characteristics of the breed:

**Protective** – Dobermans are extremely loyal and are quick to defend their owners in any situation.

**Intelligent** – The Doberman breed is one of the most intelligent dog breeds in the world. Consistently, this breed scores highly on intelligence and obedience tests.

**Active** – The breed originally hails from Germany often admired by owners for the dog's elegance and athleticism. Dobermans are high-energy dogs, both intellectually and physically, and are quick learners when it comes to dog etiquette.

With proper training and care, Dobermans are affectionally known as "Dobies" and become cherished and loving members of the family, respected for their intelligence and devotion.



Zara was trained at "Sit N' Stay Dog Academy" under the owner, Clark Inghram. Clark has been a master dog trainer for 50 years. Since 2003, this family-owned and -operated business, has been recognized as Tampa Bay's best professional dog training. A pillar of the community, Clark's experience has proven that repetition and consistency are the foundation of successful dog training. Moreover, "Sit N' Stay Dog Academy" believes that clients truly become family. The mission of "Sit N' Stay Dog Academy" is to teach owners like Jodi to become leaders for their pets. Clark's dog-training philosophy is to focus on the goals and specific needs of each family because every family deserves a special bond with their pet.

"Sit N' Stay Dog Academy" offers an array of services from puppy training, therapy-dog training, and service-dog training geared towards teaching owners the natural way to communicate with their canine companions. As a graduate of Clark Inghram's training, Zara is a well-behaved dog and trusted companion for Jodi and her family. As far as temperament, Zara is extremely affectionate, sweet, and considers herself a lap dog. She is reserved with strangers and very protective of Jodi, her family, and home. She is 85 pounds, which is considered small for the breed. However, Zara packs a lot of love into those 85 pounds.

Jodi says, "Zara is part of the family and the Jodi Avery real estate team. Part of what I love about connecting with my clients is that we offer a seamless concierge service with a warm signature touch to our clients who often become friends. Zara is an integral part of that connection. Whether being featured on social media or going with me about my day, I love having Zara by my side."



*Part of what I love about connecting with my clients is that we offer a seamless concierge service with a warm signature touch to our clients who often become friends. Zara is an integral part of that connection.*



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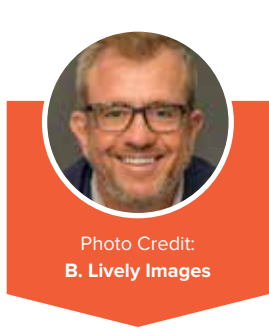
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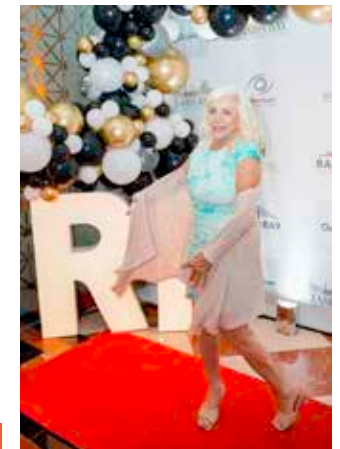
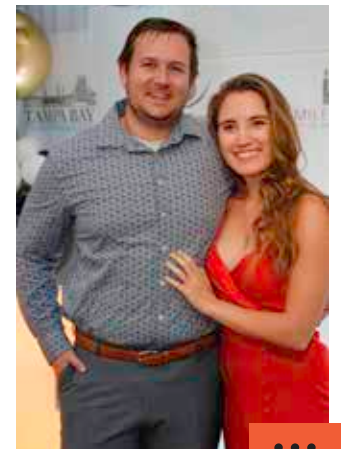
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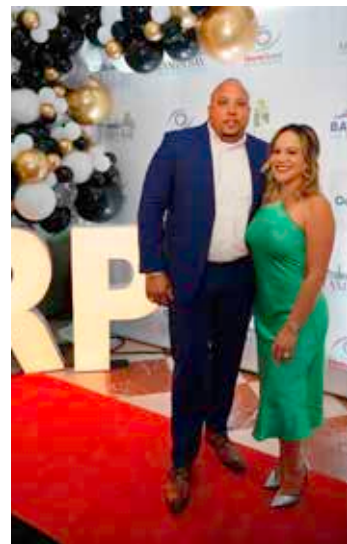
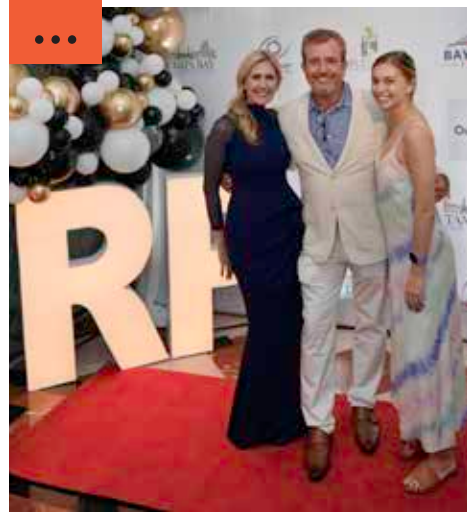


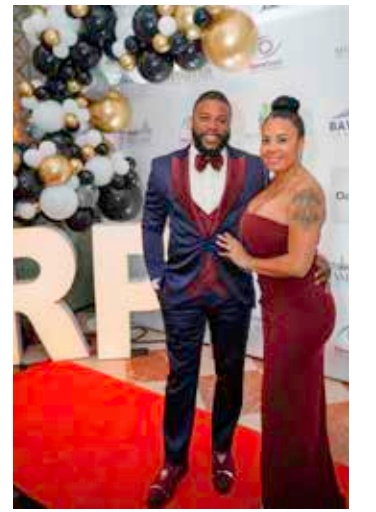
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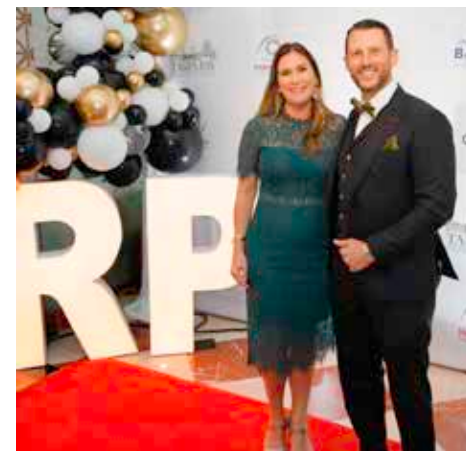
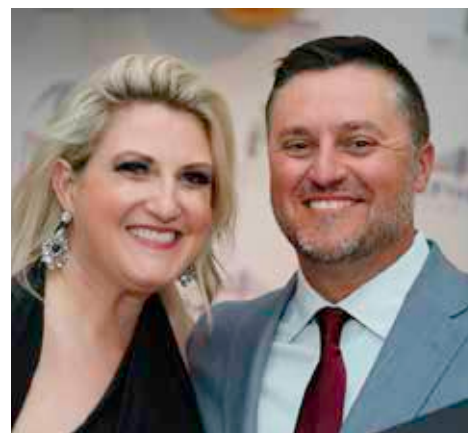
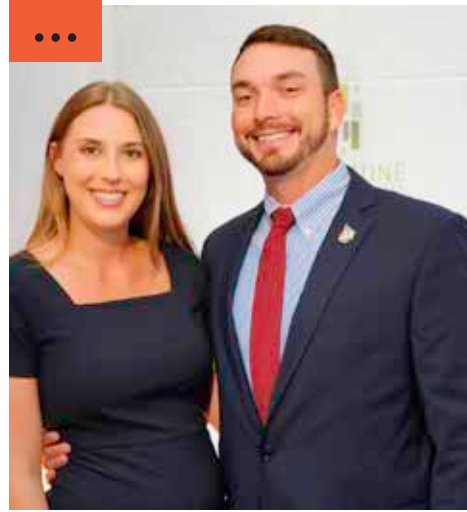


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# MARK YORKE

▶ feature



## LEADING THE LIFE HE WANTS WITH THE WORK HE LOVES



Written by Dave Danielson  
Photo Credit:  
Carol Walker/Thomas Bruce Studios

One of the ultimate dreams for most Americans is being able to do what you have a passion for while still having the chance to enjoy your favorite parts of life.

That's something that Mark Yorke feels. You can tell it instantly when you talk with him.



### ALL-IN APPRECIATION

As a REALTOR® with the Mark Yorke Home Team with Charles Rutenberg Realty, Mark has an all-in appreciation ... leading the life he wants while he does the work he loves.

“The flexibility that this career provides means so much to me. I appreciate being able to make my own schedule and also to not be limited in what you make when it comes to your paycheck,” Mark explains.

### REWARDING BALANCE

Part of the rewarding work/life balance that Mark and his family enjoy center around the way he and his wife, Kristina, educate their children at home.

“A lot of days I’ll work here at my home office. One of the best things is eating three meals a day with my family, and being able to be here for a lot of life’s moments during the day.”



“ THAT PART OF MY EXPERIENCE TAUGHT ME A LOT OF THE BASICS THAT I STILL HOLD ON TO ... THINGS LIKE THE FACT THAT THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT, AND TREATING OTHERS THE WAY YOU WANT TO BE TREATED ... **THE GOLDEN RULE IS A BIG ONE THAT I LIKE TO LIVE BY.** ”

...

**AN EARLY START**

Mark earned his Florida real estate license in 2004. Indeed, he got a very early start that was spurred on by his family’s relationship with the business through time.

“I got my license in Massachusetts when I was 18 years old. My family had always been involved with real estate,” he remembers. “At first, I got into property management and construction. I always had a heart for wanting to be a landlord.”

**GAINING EXPERIENCE**

In 2005, Mark became a mortgage broker. It was one of several forays he made into learning more about the over-all business.

“I also went to home inspection school to learn more about buying my own properties. Through time, I’ve found that experience has really allowed me to help my clients as they buy their properties.”

He was also deeply involved with the restaurant and hospitality business for a time, having served in almost every role in a restaurant.

“That part of my experience taught me a lot of the basics that I still hold on to ... things like the fact that the customer is always right, and treating others the way you want to be treated,” he says. “The Golden Rule is a big one that I like to live by.”

...

...

### BRIDGE BUILDER

As a transplant to Florida from the land of snow and ice, he takes special joy in helping others make the journey south, as well.

"I like helping others who come from the north to live this dream. I like being a bridge builder from where they are to where they dream of being," Mark says. "It is wonderful being able to live in paradise."

Through time, Mark has carved out an impressive presence in the local real estate landscape. But the rewards go way beyond the numbers he records in the course of his day-to-day work.

"One of the things I really enjoy is working with the other agents and building lasting relationships with them," Mark points out.

### THE HEART OF LIFE

Away from work, Mark looks forward to time with his family, including his wife, Kristina, and their children — Alivia Mae, Stephen Raymond, Tabor Thomas, Joyhanna Jubilee, Harmony Pamela, Karis Caylin and Jace Matthew.

In their free time, Mark and his family lead very active lives together.

"We feel lucky to live the dream of Florida living. Spending family time is wonderful. I love exploring Florida and the way the various areas of the state can be so different," Mark says. "It's so much fun having the ability to go in a camper with our children and experience these things together. It's a huge blessing."

In addition, Mark and his family enjoy time at the beach, gardening, biking, playing golf, kayaking, paddle boarding and enjoying sports and school activities. The Yorkes are also very involved with their church.

When it comes to giving back, Mark supports New Life Solutions, as well.

Congratulations to Mark Yorke on the way that he gives the best of himself to those around him while maintaining a challenging balance between family and work.

"My family members are definitely my why for what I do each day," he says. "While I serve my clients, it means so much to me to be able to be part of my kids' lives."

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# JOE meet LOCICERO

Broker/Owner of 54 Realty



Written by  
Elizabeth McCabe



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## cover story

**D**edicated. Driven. Disciplined. All those qualities describe Joe LoCicero, Broker/Owner of 54 Realty. A successful entrepreneur, Joe has the grit and determination necessary to be successful in sales.

Prior to entering real estate, Joe opened his own mortgage company in 2006. When the Great Recession hit, his business closed in 2008. Joe explains, “I had four young kids, ages 1-5, and my wife, Rose, was a homemaker at the time from 2008-2011.” Looking for his next venture in life, Joe got his 220 License and ran an Allstate agency.

Interestingly, Rose led him to real estate. She got licensed in 2011. Joe, who had his license in 2006, didn’t really use it until 2012. He worked for Berkshire Hathaway, which has since become Prudential.

“A buddy of mine in 2011 bought Zillow leads, which are a fraction of the price that they are today. I knew about leads from doing mortgages with drip campaigns, emailing, and texting,” explains Joe. He was confident in his ability to market houses and connect with customers. Joining with Rose in 2012, they worked at Keller Williams together.

“We were there for five years,” explains Joe. “We grew from a \$12-million couple to a \$75-million team.” Due to territory restrictions with Keller Williams, he went to RE/MAX in 2017 through 2019 and did very well.

His heart, however, was calling him to something more. In October 2019, they launched a brokerage and did over a billion dollars in sales, which Joe credits to Zillow. He comments, “Zillow brought a lot of business to us.” Currently, his brokerage, 54 Realty, has 72 agents and 30 staff.

Why 54 Realty? “When we started out, I didn’t want the brokerage to take on my last name. I always wanted an organization that collectively was a group of people coming together and sharing the same vision. I never wanted to be the center of attention. I want an organization that continues to thrive and no one knows who we are,” explains Joe.



### About the Brokerage

“We run a hybrid model,” explains Joe. “I don’t necessarily have a team but have a leads division and an independent model.” He, his wife, and the Broker of Record are out of production. Joe is the CEO of 54 Realty, and Rose works as the COO and in sales management.

At 54 Realty, Joe grows people who work with him to help his brokerage get to where it is today. Running his brokerage collaboratively has helped him to get the number of transactions that they have had and increase their sales volume faster than other brokerages.

“My passion is allowing people to have a platform to accomplish their goals and dreams,” explains Joe. “How can we help them with their vision? We want it to be a platform to accomplish their life goals. We want to try

to change people’s lives. Seeing his agents achieve success and live their dreams in real estate is worth every ounce of effort.

“Agents tell us how we changed their lives,” explains Joe. “Often they couldn’t pay their bills, but we can provide the type of lifestyle that they dreamt of.”

How does Joe motivate his agents? “I get to know them on a personal level.” Developing a personal relationship with them is essential. He adds, “As big as we are, I feel like we have a family environment.” He partners with agents to help them accomplish their goals.

“We are building the brokerage around each agent’s personal goals,” says Joe. When they are motivated, they are more accountable to accomplish the goals that they set for themselves.



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“We also have compassion for agents,” adds Joe. “We know that it is a tough business, and we are along for the ride with them. We have tiers of leadership. We never have an agent alone on a deserted island.” With group leaders, management, and support, agents can find the support that they desire.

“We get excited when agents thrive,” says Joe, “versus the brokerage mindset – recruit as many as you can and let those go who don’t make it.”

**Client-Centered Brokerage**

As Realty 54 continues to grow, agents continue to pay attention to their clients’ needs and remain open-minded. As Joe says, “It’s about what the client wants, not what makes it better for the REALTOR®. We aim to deliver the best customer experience possible.”

Putting the client first and building the business around what the client needs is their secret to success.

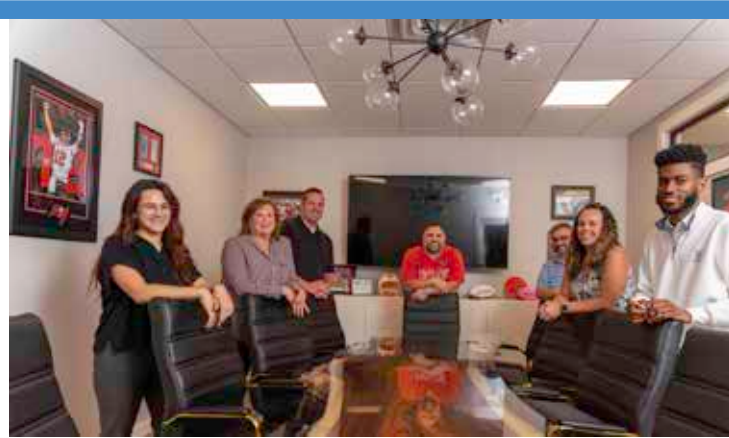
**Relaxing from Real Estate**

When Joe isn’t working, he likes to relax by watching sports. He is a season-ticket holder for the Bucs. As for Rose, she likes to unwind through gardening.

“We also have a decent-sized property at Brooksville,” says Joe. They like kayaking in the spring and riding ATVs. Other pastimes include going to the beach, enjoying the Florida weather, and being outdoors with the dogs.

He and Rose love to spend time with their children, who are heavily involved in sports. They like traveling to their games and cheering them on to victory.

We are honored to feature Joe in this month’s issue. With his drive and determination, he has achieved a great life for himself, his family, and the agents at his brokerage. He wouldn’t have it any other way.



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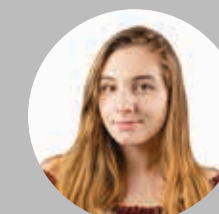
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## Will Rising Interest Rates Slow the Demand for Homes in Florida?



We recently sat down with Frank Coto the president of Lincoln Lending Group, a Florida specialty lender, open for nearly 20 years in Tampa and Sarasota.

We asked Frank his opinion of how the recent rise in interest rates will affect the purchase market in Florida and here is what Frank told us:

The easy answer is "no" especially if historical data is accurate.

When I entered the mortgage industry in 2000 interest rates were around 6.5% on a 30-year conventional fixed. Many people were refinancing out of interest rates between 8-11%.

I remember the very first person that I refinanced dropping from 8.875% to 6.375%. Obviously, the interest rates have a major impact when it comes to a refinance so why would I say that the rising interest rates will not necessarily affect the purchase business in Florida?

My answer comes from one of the most interesting interviews I've had on my radio show and podcast "The Business Happy Hour" on 970 WFLA (podcast on iHeartRadio). Tom Scaglione was the guest on the show. Tom told me that he is 77 and he has been in real estate in Tampa for about 52 years. We started talking about the rising interest rates and I asked him directly how the high interest rates in the 1980s and early 1990s affected the purchase business? His answer surprised me! Tom said "there was very little change in the number of buyers during those years. People who wanted to enjoy the dream of homeownership purchased regardless of the interest rates." Tom backed up what I had always been taught...it is still cheaper to purchase than to rent even when the interest rate is 18%!

The bottom line is people still buy homes no matter what the interest rates are. A standard 3/2 home is still cheaper to own than a 3/2 apartment. A possible piece of good news is when interest rates go up so do returns on other investments but not always at the same pace. We are still not getting more than around 1% on our savings accounts but I suspect that will change sooner than later.

Inflation is also a major factor. We saw some of the worst inflation in the country during the Carter administration and then in subsequent years interest rates rose dramatically. I was just a child at this time so I can't say I experienced it personally, but I do remember when I was about 10 or 12 years old, I asked my parents what a mortgage was. They explained that and what interest was. I remember my father explaining to me the difference between an ARM (adjustable rate mortgage) and a fixed rate mortgage. My best friend lived next door, and his parents had a fixed rate mortgage of 12%. This was on a 30-yr loan. At the time my parents' rate was 11.25% but they chose an ARM that had fluctuated between 10% and 12%.

He explained to me that when interest rates were high sometimes choosing an ARM could benefit people. We are just now starting to see ARMs come back in to play and I suspect within the next year as the interest rates increase, we will see more of them. The most popular ARM term is usually five years. This means that your loan interest rate is fixed for five years but after that it becomes adjustable even though it's still on a 30-year amortized loan.

### So, what is the real downside to the higher interest rates?

Well obviously, it increases the buyer's payment but more importantly it decreases the loan that they qualify for. This is a bad in today's market since property values are skyrocketing because of supply and demand specifically in the state of Florida. My biggest concern is that those with cash coming from the more expensive states like California, New York will outbid our local Florida residents who need mortgage financing. The increase in property values and subsequently increase in mortgage rates is limiting the buying power of those who need financing.

### Could the increase in interest rates prevent some people from being able to purchase a home at all?

No, but it will prevent them from purchasing something more expensive. People will have to change their desires to live in a certain neighborhood and potentially choose to live somewhere else or buy a condo, townhouse, modular or manufactured home instead of a single-family residence. They will not lose the opportunity to become a homeowner, but they may not be able to afford what they could last year. It is still best to purchase something and realize the equity and at the same time invest in something that you own compared to paying someone else's mortgage.

### My best advice is for people is:

DON'T DELAY BUY NOW! If you want to own a home, I encourage you to find something and purchase ASAP. It may not have everything that you want but you will start gaining equity through appreciation and amortization and eventually you will have that dream home that you always wanted!



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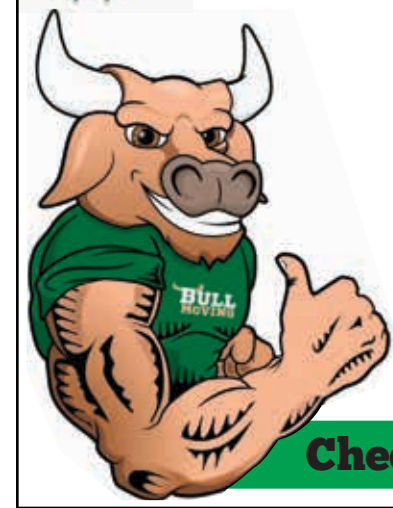
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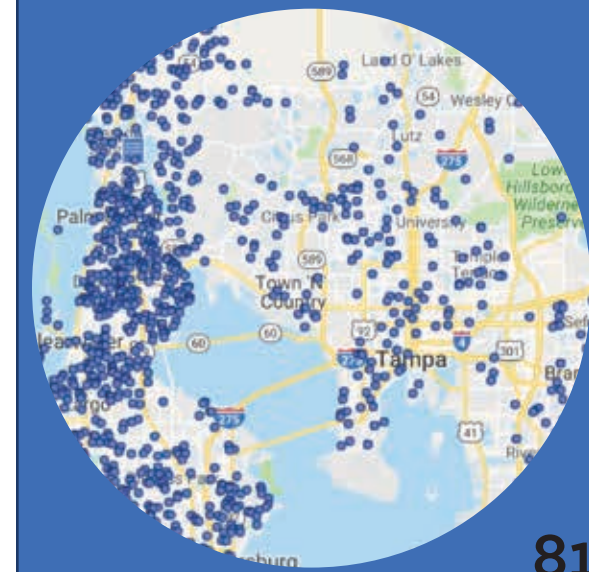
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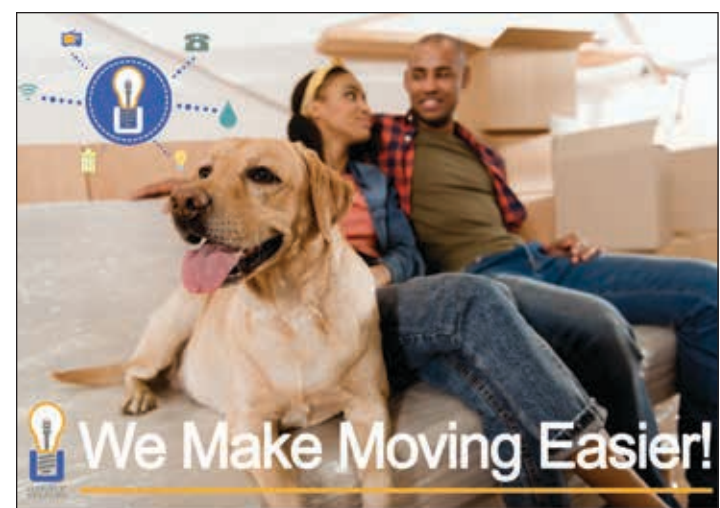
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For all questions, please reach out to Don Hill at [don.hill@realproducersmag.com](mailto:don.hill@realproducersmag.com).



# D.J. ARRRAZCAETA



## ▶ rising star

Written by Elizabeth McCabe | Photo Credit: B. Lively Images

Licensed since 2016, D.J. Arrazcaeta entered real estate after working in upper level management for corporate America. Now he works with RE/MAX Alliance group Realty and genuinely loves his job.

“Real estate was more of my passion,” explains D.J. “I was really bored with the corporate world and it took so much to be promoted with layers of complexity. I decided to do something that I loved.”

Real estate was his answer to a brighter tomorrow and a solid financial future. His career volume is 52 million with 20 million in 2020 and over 30 million in 2021.

“Last year was my first full-time year and I had a lot of success. I have evolved the business. I wake up every day and feel like I don’t really go to ‘work,’” says D.J.

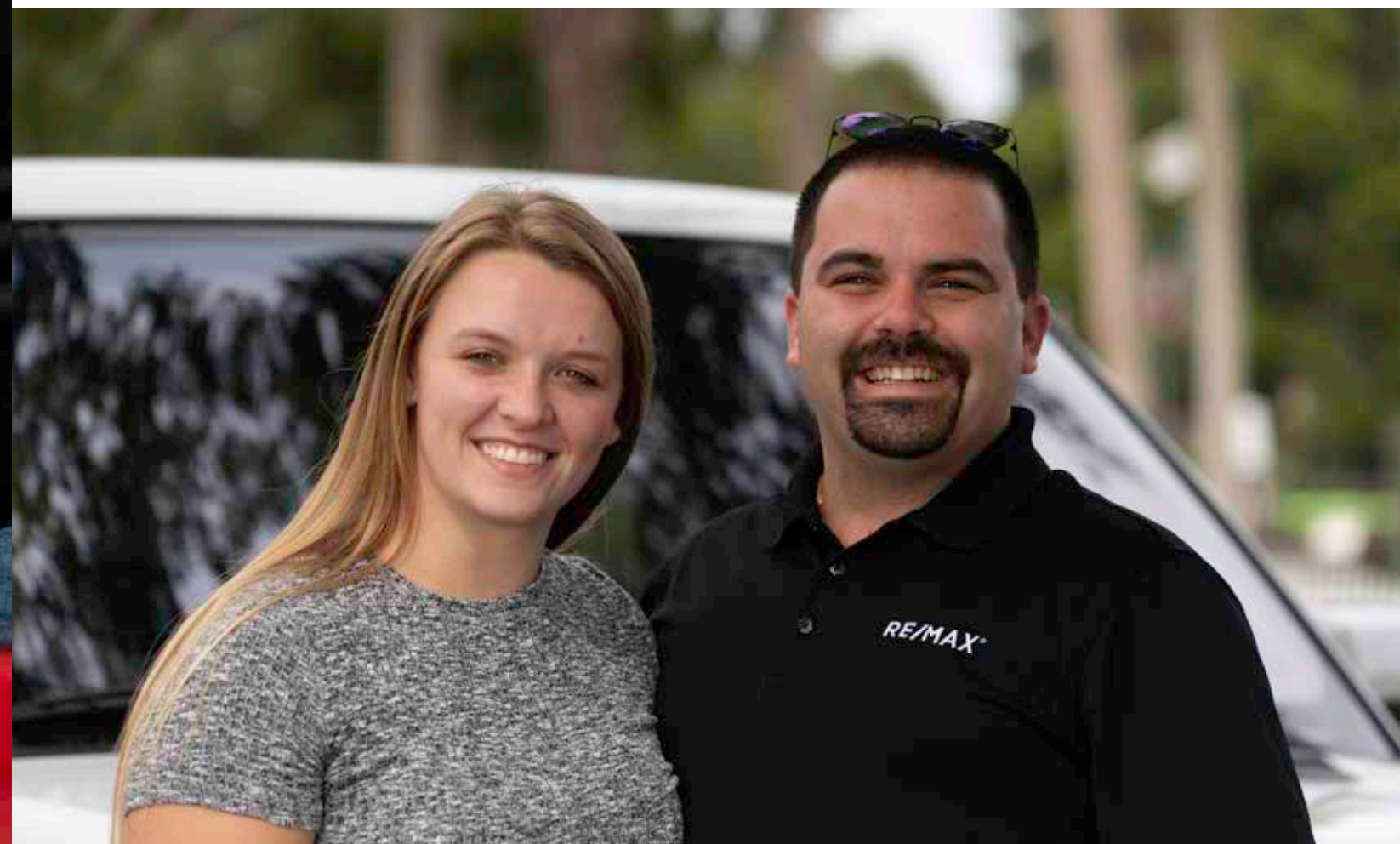
D.J. works with his fiancée, Lexi, who does all of his marketing and social media. Lexi is an R.N. who leapt into real estate at the start of the pandemic. In addition to Lexi, D.J. has an assistant, Jessie, who is his transaction manager. He is also in the process of hiring and training new agents to build a team. But for now, the only licensed agent is D.J.

### Award-Winning Agent

An award-winning agent, D.J. was honored to win the coveted RE/MAX award, given to one of the top 40 agents under 40 years old.

“It’s a really cool thing,” he smiles. “It’s nice to be recognized among peers and the event we attended in Austin, TX with agents across the company was an eye-opening experience.” This year, D.J. also earned the Chairman’s Club, which is given to those who cross half a million dollars in commission. RE/MAX also does career awards and this year he will be inducted into the RE/MAX Hall of Fame in only 2 years’ time. Something that takes most agents 5 years.

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MY BIGGEST PASSION FOR THIS BUSINESS IS DEALING WITH SOMEONE'S **LARGEST FINANCIAL ASSET**

...

**Passionate about Real Estate**

“My biggest passion for this business is dealing with someone’s largest financial asset,” explains D.J. He enjoys helping others reach their goals and making sure they are making sound financial decisions. “That’s where my passion comes from with this business,” he says.

What’s the secret to his success? It comes down to his Florida roots.

“I’ve lived here my entire life and I have a wide network of people from all over the place,” says D.J. With his people personality, he builds relationships with his clients, which turn into referrals. He always fosters his relationships with his clients, which (literally) pays off in the end. Another benefit is speaking fluent Spanish, which comes in handy in the Sunshine State. D.J. also has an incredible work ethic. “I decided to throw every ounce of energy into this business. Surprisingly, it has worked really well,” says D.J.

**D.J.’s Background**

Prior to entering real estate and corporate America, D.J. earned a Masters in Business Administration from Saint Leo University. Prior to his MBA, he earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Management and Finance from the University of Tampa.

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D.J. has an impressive background working in banking and insurance; he also has a working knowledge of the construction industry. He comments, "I grew up with a construction background. My father was in construction." D.J. has been on countless job sites and seen projects firsthand, from the floor to the roof.

"That's what makes me successful in this business. I understand all aspects of it," he says. With his construction knowledge, he can easily communicate with inspectors and understand what items are of real importance. He also understands insurance terminology due to his previous 220 insurance licensure and freely talks to insurance agents.

"I also understand the mortgage side of the business," says D.J. He can easily explain rates to his clients and walk them through any difficulties.

#### Outside Interests

When D.J. isn't working, you can find him with his fiancée Lexi who works with him in real estate. Although they don't have children, they do have three wiener dogs who are their fur babies. They make their house a home.

In his free time, D.J. enjoys collecting his classic cars, going to events, and simply going on a drive to blow off steam.

He also spends time tending to his property which he is very proud of. Being a land specialist and growing up on the property, his favorite quote is by Mark Twain, "Buy land. They aren't making it anymore." Currently, D.J. resides on 10 acres.

*We are honored to feature D.J. as our Rising Star. For more information, check out his website, [homeswithlandfl.com](http://homeswithlandfl.com).*



**BUY LAND.**

**THEY AREN'T**

**MAKING IT**

**ANYMORE.**

**-Mark Twain-**



John (left) and Jacob (right)



► sponsor spotlight

Written by Elizabeth McCabe

# KAIZEN CONSTRUCTION

Is Revolutionizing the Roofing Industry



Aerial footage from drone inspection

Necessity is the mother of invention. Kaizen Construction was launched 2 years ago after seeing a need to do things better. John Sutton, CEO, and Jacob Downs, Director of Sales, were instrumental in starting this new company to change the roofing industry.

“We were working at a different company and found out that things were run in an unethical manner. From our own moral compass, we couldn’t stand for that,” explains Jacob. “We decided to open up our own place.”

Kaizen, which is from a Japanese business model, can be defined as a change for good and continual improvement toward efficiency. Jacob says, “We are proud of the name and have done everything in our power to revolutionize the roofing industry. Roofing has taken a huge hit in terms of its integrity in the past few years.” Roofing is more than just structures on houses to the professionals at Kaizen Construction. It’s about the people,” says Jacob.

## SERVICES OFFERED

Kaizen Construction specializes in full roofing replacement. The professionals at this local company specialize in every type of roof imaginable, including asphalt, shingles, metal, tile rolled, wood, etc. With expert knowledge, they can remedy weather damage, mold and mildew, termite and pest damage, and smoke damage.

“We do it all,” says Jacob.

Kaizen stands behind their work with a 5-year leak free labor warranty. This guarantee paired with the phenomenal material warranties offered by manufacturers (30-50 years) is bound to leave their clients feeling secure knowing their roof is well protected.

## EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

The dedicated team at Kaizen Construction is full of integrity. From the office manager to the roofers, they aim to exceed expectations. Jacob comments, “We want to remove the black stain on the roofing industry.”



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With quality work and expert craftsmanship, Kaizen Construction has top talent. They employ project managers, builders, and more. They also treat their competition with respect. Through their inception, they have built their impeccable reputation with their service.

“REALTORS® are so happy that they have found a roofer that they trust,” says Jacob. “Homeowners have said the same thing.”

One thing that sets Kaizen Construction apart is offering free inspections on roofs. Jacob comments, “A couple of REALTORS® call me every week and I go look at houses. We’re happy to perform free roof inspections to check for signs of wear and tear.” If the roofing system is compromised, Jacob provides several options to move forward. “We give them an honest report and lay out the options for them.”

Jacob also is happy to come to monthly meetings at brokerages for REALTORS®. He comments, “If a real estate office wants us to speak to them about the services that we provide, we are more than happy to offer a presentation to their office. We even bring coffee and doughnuts while we educate people on our processes!”

Knowledge is power. “A new roof will raise the market value of a home, anywhere from \$15,000 - \$30,000 depending on the home. People who are assisting the sellers often call us early on to see if there’s anything we can do for the roof before it’s too late. With the right timing, we are able to provide a solution that makes the buyer, seller, and the REALTOR® very happy,” says Jacob.



#### EXPANDING THEIR OPERATIONS

“We are expanding across the state of Florida,” says Jacob. “We have great connections in the state with 175 crews all over the state, including Jacksonville, Pensacola, Miami, Orlando, and Tampa. By the end of next year, we aim to have offices in each of those locations.”

We are honored to feature Kaizen Construction in this month’s issue. For more information, check out their website, [www.kaizenconstructiongroup.com](http://www.kaizenconstructiongroup.com).



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